IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant:	Michael R. Smith		
Assignee:	Cisco Technology, Inc.		
Title:	Method And Apparatus For Providing Network Security Using Security Labeling		
Application No.:	10/696,629	Filing Date:	October 29, 2003
Examiner:	Abdulhakim Nobahar	Group Art Unit:	2432
Docket No.:	CIS0195US	Confirmation No.	5549

Austin, Texas
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Mail Stop ISSUE FEE
Commissioner for Patents
P. O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

COMMENTS ON STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

Dear Sir:

In the Statement of Reasons for Allowance of the Notice of Allowance (dated July 12, 2010), the Examiner provided reasons for allowance of claims 1-37, 39-56, 58-70, 90-93 and 96-118. In the Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance, the Examiner stated:

> "The primary reasons for the allowance of the independent claims 1, 33, 52, 90, 104 and 112 are the inclusion of the following limitations that are not found in the prior art and they are uniquely distinct features. The closest prior art is Antur et al. (US 6,212,558 A1). Antur et al. discloses a method for configuring a plurality of network security devices, includes the steps of providing a network directory services server providing network directory services to a plurality of network servers, each of the plurality of network servers coupled to one of the plurality of network security devices, and implementing a security policy for the plurality of network security devices on the network directory services server. Antur et al. further discloses

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firewalls and other types of security devices that provide means of enforcing security policies that define acceptable uses of applications and acceptable access to information for both inbound and outbound.

However, this art fails to anticipate or render the following limitations:

"Claim 1: said second security level information is received from another network node of said network as a result of said second security level information being registered in a context,

said second security level information is configured to be updated by virtue of said second security level information being configured to be combined with third security level information".

"Claim 33: said second security level information is received from another network node of said network as a result of said second security level information being registered in a context,

said second security level information is configured to be updated by virtue of said second security level information being configured to be combined with third security level information".

"Claim 52: said second security level information is received from another network node of said network as a result of said second security level information being registered in a context,

said second security level information is configured to be updated by virtue of said second security level information being configured to be combined with third security level information".

"Claim 90: said second security level information is received from another network node of said network as a result of said second security level information being registered in a context,

said second security level information is configured to be updated by virtue of said second security level information being configured to be combined with third security level information".

"Claim 104: said second security level information is received from another network node of said network as a result of said second security level information being registered in a context,

said second security level information is configured to be updated by virtue of said second security level information being configured to be combined with third security level information".

"Claim 112: said second security level information is received from another network node of said network as a result of said second security level information being registered in a context,

said second security level information is configured to be updated by virtue of said second security level information being configured to be combined with third security level information".

(Notice of Allowance, pp. 2 - 5.)

As an initial matter, Applicant wishes to express his appreciation for the allowance of claims 1-37, 39-56, 58-70, 90-93 and 96-118. However, Applicant respectfully notes that other points of distinction exist between the cited references and the claimed invention, in addition to those stated in the foregoing passages and elsewhere during the prosecution of the instant application. Thus, Applicant feels compelled to submit, respectfully, the following additional observations. Independent claim 1, which is representative of the remaining independent claims, reads as follows:

1. A method comprising:
comparing first security level information and second security level information, wherein
said first security level information is stored in a security label of a packet
received at a network node of a network,
said first security level information represents a first security level,

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said first security level is a security level of a source of said packet,

said second security level information is stored at said network node,

said second security level information is received from another network node of said network as a result of said second security level information being registered in a context,

said second security level information is configured to be updated by virtue of said second security level information being configured to be combined with third security level information,

said second security level information represents a second security level,

said second security level is a security level of a destination of said packet,

said network comprises a plurality of network nodes,

said network nodes comprise said network node and said another network node, and

said network nodes are configured to convey packets to one another via others of said network nodes; and

indicating processing to be performed on said packet based on said comparing, wherein said processing comprises

determining whether to forward said packet from said network node to one of said network nodes.

As will be noted from a comparison of the quoted paragraphs and claim 1, as reproduced above (and indeed, each of the independent claims), the features mentioned are not a complete representation of the elements of the independent claims. That being the case, Applicant respectfully submits that this paragraph is not a complete representation of those claims. However, Applicant does agree that the closest references fail to disclose the limitations recited in allowed claims 1-37, 39-56, 58-70, 90-93 and 96-118.

Moreover, even while accepting the allowed claims in their present form, Applicant does not (and need not) necessarily agree with the characterizations of any references (cited or

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otherwise) or the language of the claims, as espoused by the Examiner in the above passages, or at other points during the prosecution of these claims. In so stating, then, Applicant maintains his position with regard to the cited references, as presented during the prosecution of this application.

CONCLUSION

Applicant therefore respectfully submits that the Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance fails to accurately reproduce the language of the claims in at least with respect to the foregoing. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at 512-439-5084, if there are any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

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